

IRS News Release

Media Relations Office

Washington, D.C.

Media Contact: 202.622.4000

www.irs.gov/newsroom

Public Contact: 800.829.1040

IRS Headquarters Reopens; First Employees Return Today

IR-2006-188, December 8, 2006

WASHINGTON – The Internal Revenue Service Headquarters Building reopened today as the first wave of employees returns to the facility following extensive flooding in June, the IRS and General Services Administration announced today.

The phased move-in of more than 2,000 IRS employees will continue in coming weeks following repairs to key parts of the infrastructure at the building, located at 1111 Constitution Ave. NW.

Torrential rains closed the building beginning June 26 after an estimated 5.5 million gallons of water flooded the basement and sub-basement. The unprecedented flooding caused extensive damage, destroying or heavily damaging electrical equipment and air handlers.

“The reopening of the Headquarters wraps up an unprecedented period for the IRS Headquarters personnel,” said Commissioner Mark W. Everson.

“I appreciate the efforts of all our employees during this period,” Everson said. “In addition, I want to thank the IRS workers, contractors and GSA who repaired the building and ensured its’ safety for employees. I particularly want to thank GSA for keeping this project on track and meeting the key deadlines so the Headquarters could reopen before the beginning of the January tax season.”

“Teamwork is never more important than in times of emergency. The IRS performs a vital mission for our citizens and our nation, and is among GSA’s most important client agencies. When disaster struck, we were privileged to help, first by finding alternative workspace, and then by arranging the required repairs and renovations in record time,” said GSA Administrator Lurita Doan.

“I would like to thank Administrator Doan and her team for the priority they have given this project,” Everson added.

IRS employees, who have been working at 15 other buildings in the Metro Washington area, will be moved back to the IRS in stages. Today, about 400 employees return to the 1111 building. By Monday, more than 600 additional employees will return, including much of the Chief Counsel operation. Another 800 employees will be back in the building by Dec. 19. A small number of employees will return after Jan. 1.

- more -

GSA spent more than \$25 million repairing the building, which suffered extensive damage in the subbasement and basement. The subbasement – which was under 20 feet of water -- holds all of the building's electrical and maintenance equipment such as electrical transformers, electrical switchgears, and chillers. The basement damage included food service canteens, offices, ceiling tiles and some computer equipment. While the electrical and air systems have been repaired, construction work will continue on other basement areas until approximately April.

The building has been tested extensively during this period by a variety of health and safety officials. The Federal Occupational Health Service (FOH), part of Health and Human Services, has approved the building as safe for occupancy. A team of industrial hygienists has continually monitored the facility since the flood to ensure the environment was safe for anyone entering the building. Building management staff and the industrial hygienists have taken extraordinary measures to thoroughly clean, test and inspect the building.